Public Health Update

SARS-CoV-2 Testing Options and Reporting Positive Results

March 12, 2020

Situation

For primary providers, private providers, urgent cares and non-hospital clinics:

COVID-19 diagnostic testing, authorized by the Food and Drug Administration under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA), is now available in reference laboratories (Quest Diagnostics and LabCorp). This additional testing capacity will allow clinicians to consider COVID-19 testing for a wider group of symptomatic patients who have been assessed and meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines/criteria for testing. Healthcare providers now have the option to collect the sample and deliver to Quest Diagnostics or LabCorp.

Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory (SNPHL) cannot pick up specimens from the outlying offices, urgent care clinics, etc. SNPHL will continue to pick up specimens from local hospitals when properly notified. If providers choose to send specimens to Quest Diagnostics and/or LabCorp; providers and laboratories must report all positive laboratory results for COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 to Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD).

Recommendations for Healthcare Providers for Collecting Specimens

Specimen Type and Priority

For initial diagnostic testing for COVID-19, CDC recommends collecting and testing upper respiratory (nasopharyngeal **AND** oropharyngeal swabs), and lower respiratory (sputum, if possible) for those patients with productive coughs. Induction of sputum is not recommended. Specimens need to be stored at 2-8°C. Specimens should be collected as soon as possible once a PUI is identified, regardless of the time of symptom onset. Maintain proper infection control (https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/isolation/index.html#a4) when collecting specimens.

Specimen Testing via SNHD/ State of Nevada Public Health Lab – For Hospitals

- Collect nasopharyngeal AND oropharyngeal swabs placed in **one** Viral Transport Medium (VTM); sputum from productive cough should be placed into a sterile, leak-proof, screw-cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container.
- Label VTM correctly with name, date of birth, specimen source, collection date and time and collector's initials.
- Place VTM into a biohazard bag, place this bag into a second biohazard bag. If a sputum is collected, place into its' own separate bag.
- Each specimen collected will need to have a requisition form filled out.
- Each specimen needs to be placed in its own biohazard bag with its own requisition. Place the requisition in the outside packet of the biohazard bag.
- Specimens need to be stored at 2-8°C.
- Tests will be performed at SNPHL.

Specimen Testing via Quest Diagnostics

- TEST CODE: 39433 – SARS-CoV-2 RNA
- Nasopharyngeal swab – VCM transport tube green cap (refrigerated) Test Code 39433
- Throat swab – VCM transport tube green cap (refrigerated) Test Code 39433
- Strict refrigeration - Specimens need to be stored at 2-8°C
- Sample must be in its' own separate bag – no other test requests
- Tests will be performed in the Quest Infectious Disease Lab in San Juan Capistrano, CA and has a 24-hour TAT once received. It cannot be ordered STAT and must be in its own bag without any other test requests.
- Patients are not to be referred to a Quest Diagnostics lab facility for sample collection. Sample collection is to be done by the provider.

Specimen Testing via LabCorp

- TEST CODE: 139900 – 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), NAA
- Nasopharyngeal (NP) or oropharyngeal (OP) swab in viral transport medium
- NP or OP washes/aspirates in sterile, leak proof, screw cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container
- Bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) or bronchial washings; 2-3 mL collected in sterile, leak proof, screw cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container
- Frozen (preferred), refrigerated at 2-8°C (if received within 72 hours)
- Please submit separate frozen specimens for each test requested
- Specimens should be shipped overnight to the laboratory according to standard operating procedures
- Patients are not to be referred to a LabCorp lab facility for sample collection. Sample collection is to be done by the provider.

Reference: https://files.labcorp.com/labcorp-d8/2020-03/22767%20Coronavirus%20%28COVID-19%29%20External%20Q%26A%20March%202020_FINAL_1.pdf

Reporting Positive Lab Results

It is the responsibility of the healthcare provider to report ALL positive COVID-19 labs to SNHD.

- Fax patient's medical records and positive lab results to SNHD at 702-759-1414 marked "COVID-19" on the top page

SNHD Limitations Concerning COVID-19

- Do not refer patients to SNHD for COVID-19 testing or treatment
- SNHD does not provide masks, gloves or other PPE for the public
- SNHD does not provide Medical Certification for Return Travel

References:

CDC - Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens from Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html

CDC - Frequently Asked Questions on COVID-19 Testing at Laboratories:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/testing-laboratories.html

Quest Diagnostics - Our Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
http://www.questdiagnostics.com/home/Covid-19/

LabCorp - Information from LabCorp about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
https://www.labcorp.com/information-labcorp-about-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19 and
Q&A: LabCorp 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), NAA Test [139900]
https://files.labcorp.com/labcorp-d8/2020-03/22767%20Coronavirus%20%28COVID-19%29%20External%20Q%26A%20March%202020_FINAL_1.pdf

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